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A PERILOUS TRIP

FROM RICHMOND TO BALTIMORE

DURING THE WAR.

Crossing the Potomac Dead-Line—Job

Stuart and the Federal Cavalry

—A Dash of Adventure, Danger

and Romance.

(Mrs. E. M. McGee in Philadelphia Times)

In August, 1862, I chanced to meet in Richmond a gentleman who told me of a successful trip to Baltimore across the lines to Baltimore. My husband had some money there which we needed very much. It was a temptation not to be resisted. My husband was in the Confederate army and my two children were at school in South Carolina, so there was no one to raise objections and my own inclination to urge me speedily decided the question. I secured from the gentleman his route in minute detail.

At Hanover Junction I had so much trouble to get conveyance to Bowling Green that I was at the point of going back, ignominiously, when I saw a carriage drive up to the point where I was waiting. A few questions and answers put me in possession of the fact that Dr. B., who lived near Bowling Green, was expected on the train and this was his carriage sent to meet him. When he arrived I sent for him and begged permission to go with him. He politely consented. After a night of rest and comfort the good doctor carried me over to Bowling Green, got me a carriage and I departed with his blessing. The thoughtful kindness of Mrs. B. had supplied me with an ample lunch basket well stored with delicacies and substantial.

The next night, Fort Royal, on the Rappahannock, was reached in perfect comfort and safety. I met at the hotel there four ladies returning to Richmond from Baltimore. The first thing to do was to find a boatman willing to row me over the river, which was both difficult and hazardous, owing to the fact that Federal gunboats were almost constantly passing and were liable to come around a bend at any time. I was about concluding a bargain with a party when a regiment of Federal cavalry dashed into the town and as suddenly every one disappeared—among them my boatman. For a while we kept very still, but my curiosity overcoming, I went out to look at the situation from our veranda.

The Federals had taken possession of an eminence in front of us and thus commanded the town. On a beautifully shaded grassy slope in full view, they were making themselves at home after the style of cavaliers under such circumstances. The horses were turned out to graze. Officers and men lounged about under the trees eating, drinking and smoking. Sometimes a loud laugh or snatch of a song reached our ears, showing the soldiers to be entirely at ease.

At this moment the sound of horse's hoofs attracted my attention in another direction. Supporting the new comers to be more Federal, I was about turning to re-enter the house with a heavy heart when a glance at the rapidly approaching party gave me pause. A bound and with a shrill of hoofs and feet I recognized the Confederate uniform. In another moment I saw that the foremost cavalier was an old friend of ours. I did not go into the house then. An exclamation showed that the recognition was mutual. I knew that he was a member of Gen. J. E. B. Stuart's staff, although when I last met him he was a minister of the gospel.

A few hearty words of greeting and explanation on both sides were exchanged, when Gen. Stuart riding up, the colonel, my friend, introduced me. He remarked at the same time that I wished to cross the line, but was afraid to attempt it on account of those troops, pointing, as he said it, over his shoulder at the Federals. Gen. Stuart laughed as he said: "Madam, you need have no fears. They are lagged. We have surrounded them." Raising my eyes to the hill opposite I saw the confirmation of his words. The transfer of arms and munitions of war was actually taking place at the moment.

I was not long in crossing the river, and before many hours had passed I reached Dr. Stewart's house. It was quite dark, although we had driven rapidly. The doctor met me at the door with a hearty welcome. He sent for Mrs. Stewart and both cheerfully promised all the assistance in their power.

At the supper table I met Miss Stewart, a prepossessing young lady, very handsome and dashing. Mrs. Stewart unlocked a cabinet, and taking therefrom a pistol handed it to her daughter and another she placed in her own belt. She said to me: "Now, Mr. M., my daughter and myself are ready to go with you. The doctor is not able to go out after night. We will do our best to defend and protect you." There was a dash of adventure and danger and of romance that quite thrilled me at this point. We had all talked at Richmond and elsewhere about our patriotism and all the rest, but I had never before been brought into direct contact with anything like this.

It was necessary to make the crossing at night. The carriage, driven by a faithful old servant of Mrs. Stewart, proceeded slowly through the woods. We were mostly silent or spoke in a low tone. My own reflections were full of anxiety and, perhaps, fear, as we went on and on through the dark forest, damp with dew and weird and solemn enough for a funeral pall for all the dead slain in the war. It was after midnight when we stopped. A signal was given and almost immediately a voice said: "All right, Mrs. Stewart." We waited perhaps ten minutes, when we were joined by a gentleman to whom Mrs. Stewart explained our wishes.

To my regret he said it was too late to make the attempt that night. But he would be glad to have me remain at his house until the next night, when he said he would put me across himself. The next night I crossed safely to the northern shore of the Potomac. We rowed into one of many creaks to the house of a southern gentleman, through whose kindness I was enabled to reach Port Tobacco, ten miles distant, the next day. There I took the stage for Washington City. The only passenger besides myself was a gentleman from the south, also running the blockade, from whom I received some valuable suggestions. Hanging on now I reached my friends in Baltimore next morning, worn out with fatigue, and excited.

BRUDDER BROWN'S "BLESSIN'."

(From "Christmas Night at the Quarters"—by

Irwin Russell in Scribner's Monthly, Jan. 1884.)

The simple race is,

That "works the craps" on cotton places;

Original in act and thought,

Because unlearned and untaught,

Observe them at their Christmas party.

How unrestrained their mirth—how hearty!

How many things they say and do,

That never would occur to you!

See Brudder Brown—whose saving grace

Would sanctify a quarter race—

Out on the crowded floor advance,

To "leg a blessin' on dis dance."

O Mahur! let dis gath'rin' fin' a blessin' in yo'

sight!

Don't judge us hard for what we does—you

knows it's Ch'ristmas Night;

An' all de balmance ob de yeh, we does as

right's we wit—

Et dancin' wrong—oh, Mahur! let de time

excuse de sin!

We labors in de vineyard—workin' hard, an'

workin' true—

Now, shurely you won't notus, ef we eats a

grape or two,

An' takes a little holiday—a kette restin'—

spell—

Bekase, nex' week, we'll start in fresh, an'

labor twicet as well.

Remember, Mahur—min' dis, now—do sinful-

ness ob sin

Is 'peenin' 'jest de sperrit what we goes an'

does it in?

An' in a right's frame ob min' we's gwine

to dance an' sing.

A-feelin' like King David, when he cut de

pigeon-wing.

It seems to me—indeed it do—I mebbe mout

be wrong.

That people raly ought to dance, when

Christmas come along;

Des dance bekase dey's happy—like de birds

hop in de trees:

De pine-top biddle soundin' to de bowin' oh de

breace.

We has no mark to dance afore, like Isral's

prophet king;

We has no harp to sound de chords, to help

us out to sing;

But 'coridin' to de gifts we has we does de

best we knows—

An' folks don't 'spise de villet-bow' bekase it

ain't de rose.

You bless us, please sah, eben if we's doin'

wrong to-night.

Kase den we'll need de blessin' more'n if we's

doin' right;

An' let de blessin' stay wid us, untill we

comes to die,

An' goes to keep our Christmas wid dem

sheffits in de sky!

Yes, tell dem prebels anjels we's agwine to

see 'em soon:

Our voices we's trainin' for to sing de glory

tune;

We's ready when you wants us, an' it aint no

matter when—

O Mahur! call yo' chillen soon, an' take 'em

home! Amen.

—Woman of Business.

(Chicago Sun.)

There is a live business woman in De-

laware, who is said to have made "plenty

of money" the past year by plying her voca-

tion as a street contract-rever. She is accus-

ed to buy materials in large quantities and

never failing to meet her obligations

promptly as they fall due, she has succeeded

in establishing a credit in business circles

that is really gilt-edged. She buys furniture

in Chicago by the carload; she buys carpet

Anna, this state; while stone is brought di-

rect from the quarries at Alto and other

places; the balance of the raw materials, such

as composition, lime, etc., are pur-

chased in St. Louis, where she also gets her

asphalt at a handsome percentage off from

the St. Louis price-list.

The Simplicity of Entertainment.

(Kansas City Journal.)

It not only takes the purse of the wealthy

beyond patronage, but involves the household

in such a whirlwind of labor that everyone

dreads a lunch party. What we need is

some one brave enough to pioneer. A series

of evenings, calling together only those who

will make a harmonious company, are be-

yond value, as mediums of real pleasure.

Why do wife or men and women of letters

care for course after course of extravagant

preparation? Some of the real letter days

that come vividly to us were those where the

entables were so simple that now they are

merely a very delicate and subjective por-

tion of a pleasant time. We should make

what we eat a most insignificant part of our

entertaining.

Grandmother's Cosmetic.

(The Argonaut.)

"The only cosmetic I have used," said an

old lady the other day, "is a flannel wash

cloth every night and morning with clear

water as hot as I can bear it, using

for the purpose a small square of flannel

renewed as often as it grows thick and fel-

like. My mother taught me to do this, as

her mother had done before her. No soap

or powder, nor glycerine even, has touched

my face, and this is what my skin is at 60,"

she finished, touching with pardonable pride

a cheek which peaches bloom and fine soft

texture gave effective emphasis to her recipe.

Mrs. Bryant's Diary.

(Atlanta Constitution.)

A leaf from the diary of the mother of

William Cullen Bryant reads as follows:

"Made Austin a coat," "Spun four skeins of

wool," "Spun thirty knots of linen,"

"Taught Cullen his letters," "Made a pair of

brooches," "Wove four yards and went

quitting," "Made a dress for the boy,"

"Sowed on a shirt," "Wove four yards, and

visited Mrs. —," "Washed and ironed."

Fans of Birds' Plumage.

(Chicago Herald.)

Beautiful fans are made entirely of the

plumage of tropical birds in their natural

colors. A web of feather cloth is formed by

gluing the plumage, each tiny feather

separately, upon silk fabric. This gives the

texture the precise appearance of a living

bird. The tops are tipped with ostrich

feathers.

Don't Allow It.

(Chicago Herald.)

An English physician warns mothers

against allowing babies to suck their thumbs,

because it results in a peculiar deformity of

the chest, a depression of the thorax by

pressure from the arm of the infant as it lies

with its thumb in its mouth.

Notice to Smokers.

(Texas Siftings.)

The conductor of a Dallas street car was

shocked at observing a passenger smoking a

cigar.

"Look here! If you want to smoke in this

car, you must get off the car."

The man paid no attention whatever.

"I say, you must throw away your cigar if

you are going to smoke in this car."

The man, who was a reporter, put away

the stump carefully in his pocket, but the

conductor to this day cannot understand why

the passenger is punished.

DANGERS OF THE DEEP.

MEANS TAKEN BY THE LIGHT-HOUSE

BOARD TO WARN MARINERS.

Some Interesting Facts Concerning Dan-

ger Signals Used at Sea—Gongs, Bells,

Whistles, Trumpets, Guns,

and Rockets.

(New Orleans Times-Democrat.)

The government at its different stations

uses various descriptions of sound signals for

the guidance of mariners during fogs, storms

and heavy weather. There is a treacherous

intelligence arrogated by the sea that re-

quires all the ingenuity and ability of man

to guard and fight against. There is never a

vessel that sails from a harbor or a steamer

that goes out of a port laden with freight

and life, but is liable to encounter some

tremendous gale or meet with mishap as

about entering her designated haven of rest.

To obviate the mysterious disappearances

and the frightful calamities incident to the

sea, scientific men have bent their energies

and their knowledge gathered from all the

sources of observation and personal expe-

rience. They have drawn upon the informa-

tion of the world's explorers, have collated

facts, given birth to theories, improved

methods, invented instruments and informed

the public and national governments of their

discoveries. Every practical invention and

skill of mechanics has been experimented

with, tried, adapted, and put into use for

the benefit of the maritime world.

The Times-Democrat reporter called the

other day at the office of Commissioner Day,

United States navy, in charge of this light-

house district, and learned some interesting

facts connected with the means and miles of

warning mariners of impending dangers.

Sound signals by means of gongs are some-

what used on lightships, especially in British

water, but are intended for use in close

quarters, narrow harbors, and short chan-

nels. Their effective range is barely 350

yards. The use of guns is going out of date,

though there are instances on record where

they have been serviceable. They have been

abandoned on account of the length of inter-

vals between successive explosions, the brief

duration of the sound, its liability to be

quenched by local winds, its easy oblitera-

tion by a sudden puff of wind, and other ob-

jectionable reasons.

The gun-cotton rocket has been found quite

serviceable in night light-houses. A charge

of gun-cotton is thrust in the head of a

rocket, which is projected to the height of

1,000 feet, when the cotton is exploded and

the sound is heard in all directions. Some

of these rockets have been heard at a distance

of twenty-five miles.

Every United States light station has in

use a bell signal. Many of these signals are

run by clock-work machinery. The bells

weigh all the way from 300 to 3,000 pounds.

They are in use all along the coast of the

United States. The distances at which the

tolling of the bell can be heard vary accord-

ing to circumstances and atmospheric con-

ditions, are uncertain, and, like the gong, are

reliable only at short distances.

The whistling buoys, consisting of an iron

pear-shaped bulb, twelve feet across at its

